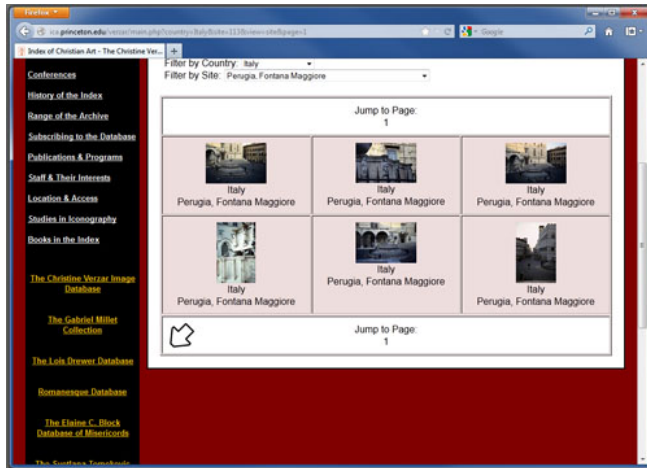# Resources from the Index of Christian Art outside of the Index Itself

Jon Niola

Today I am not going to talk about the Index proper. Instead, I am going to focus on these additional resources we have created for the general public and which many people miss out on! Unlike the Index itself which is subscription based, these various databases are publicly accessible and free of charge and do not require a password to see the material.

We are in a period of transition from analog to digital. There are many people and institutions with large collections of slides and photographs that are currently not being used. For whatever reason-possibly lack of resources or experience or finances-they can't undertake the conversion themselves. Over time, we have either approached or been approached by such individuals and institutions to see if the Index would be interested in acquiring their image collections.

One such collection which is now called The Metcalf Database was stored unused in the Dayton Art Institute in Ohio for many years before it was transferred to Princeton approximately ten years ago. While in Dayton, the quality of the slides deteriorated and they were in a fragile state when transferred to Princeton. The original slides were made by Kodak for the Metcalfs long before the slide was commercially available. These were among the first generation of photographic slides and the color was often inaccurate or sometimes lost. We decided not to try to enhance the color quality and present them as is. It was decided that in advance of adding them to the Index proper we would scan the slides and catalogue the images using a narrow set of fields. This would then enable us to make them publicly available on the Index website.

It proved to be a quick and easy way to get this and similar collections out to the public-in advance of us incorporating them into the main Index of Christian Art database. As it is, the images are continually being linked to existing records within the database where they are more thoroughly catalogued.

In order to get these collections out to the general public in a timely manner we usually limit our cataloging metadata to four or five fields. Country, site, date, etc.-usually what is on the image when we get it and what can be acquired without too much work.

As we have acquired a number of collections over the years we have refined our workflow. We actively seek out collections that we think people will find of interest and often due to our reputation and ninety-five years of established history some people seek us out to give us their collections.


The images are scanned, manipulated and resized for the web. We always keep a master copy TIFF format as well as lower resolution JPG file. The owners of the original images are always given a copy of both sets of digital files. A member of the Index staff will enter the metadata in the database and identify any missing data should it be needed. The end result is a basic web gallery browsable by country and site. Larger but unpublishable images can be accessed from this gallery display.

I have built this web application and customized it for the Index. It is tailored for each special collection we get and I can reuse most of the programming code and make a few adjustments here and there as necessary for a given collection.

Now we have some ten separate databases available on the Index website, and each has a story to tell. In many cases these private collections were someone's lifelong passion that they decided to share with the world, often focused on a particular area.
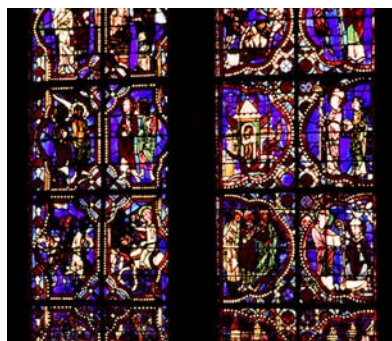
One example is that of Robert and Gertrude Metcalf. They photographed stained glass windows

throughout Europe during World War II, oftentimes just a day or so ahead of the enemy army's advance. After the war some of their images were used by various churches to reconstruct or reinstall windows they had removed before the fighting began. There are over 9,300 images in this collection and it is one of our most heavily used. It provides a pre-war record of the original glass and is unique in this respect.
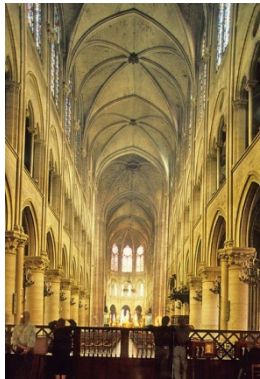
Tuck Langland spent 40 years photographing gothic architecture mostly in France and as a result we are able to offer almost 1,800 images for scholarly use.

Svetlana Tomekovic who passed away at a young age of 53 is able to live on through her extensive collection of photographs of Byzantine art. While her original collection of 6,000 slides is now part of the Sorbonne we have almost 4,000 digital images from this archive on our site.

The Elaine C Bloch database is the largest resource of it's kind for the study of the misericord. We currently have almost 12,000 images in this unique collection available to browse on our web site.

The Gabriel Millet collection of about 10,000 slides was transferred from its home in The Sorbonne in Paris to Princeton where we digitized them over a period of a year. This is one of, if not the largest collection of Byzantine and Early Christian art and is the largest archive for the study of this material in existence and

among the most valuable in it's coverage as many of the photos were taken by Millet prior to restoration.

Lois Drewer who worked in the Index of Christian Art for over twenty years passed away in 2011 had a large collection of over 3,000 slides that we decided to digitize and make available for scholarly use in her honor. Her collection is mostly classical world and renaissance architecture.

The Romanesque database was given to us by two Swiss donors who wish to remain anonymous. It is a generous collection of almost 6,000 slides of medieval art and architecture of which we have made 5,200 available on our site. They spent their life photographing these sites.

Although not in the same database format as the others, the Mills-Kronborg is a unique collection of Danish wall paintings that we have made available on our site as well.

The most recent archive to be added to the Index is the personal research collection of Christine Verzar. Although Professor Verzar has recently retired she still continues to work. Her collection deals mostly with the Romanesque with a particular focus on 12th century Italy. Many of the images reflect Christine's own scholarship and it is possible to see her methodology in this collection which is particularly strong on micro-details. Thanks to

Christine's generosity we are able to offer high resolution files of these images to interested scholars.

We have photographic rights on many of these collections such as Mills-Kronborg, Metcalf, Drewer, Romanesque, Langland, and Verzar. For these collections FOR which we have photographic rights, we use lower resolution web-friendly images on our site and in PowerPoint presentations but we CAN provide high-resolution files to anyone who wants them for scholarly use. They are copyrighted to the Index.

We get many queries and suggestions from our users and these public collections generate a substantial amount of web traffic. As of 2012, these special collections make some 48,307 images available for public access.

Eventually we plan to integrate all of these collections into a single, new database that is also keyword searchable.

It has always been Princeton's wish to contribute to medieval scholarship and these additional resources are our way of fulfilling that mission. We will continue to provide additional resources to the public whenever we have the opportunity and hope that it will benefit all.